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ABSTRACT

Staff of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) have developed procedures for helping school district and building staffs use and report assessment results. There are procedures for using results at the district level, school building level and classroom level included in the appendix. This model is applicable to other state programs faced with the challenge of teaching local educators to use their results. These ideas are based on realistic estimates of resources available locally. The use and reporting model is predicated on several assumptions: (1) test results should be used to help students learn; (2) members of the public have a right to know about their schools; (3) most local educators are not well trained in testing, or the use of test results in instruction; (4) without training and motivation to use results, many local educators will ignore the results; (5) there are simple ways of using test results and these can be taught to local educators; and (6) the use of the results by the teachers and the principle and the reporting of the results at the district level to the school board and media and at the building level to the parents are very much interrelated. (Author/GK)

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TEACHING LOCAL EDUCATORS TO USE AND REPORT STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As a result of experience in training local districts to use State Assessment results, staff of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) have developed procedures for helping school district and building staffs use and report assessment results. There are procedures for using results at the district level, school building level and classroom level (see Appendix A). This model of using and reporting test results is applicable to other state programs that are faced with the challenge of teaching local educators to use their results. As was discussed in an earlier paper*, these ideas came from observing schools that made use of the results, so they are based on realistic estimates of resources available locally.

Assumptions

The use and reporting model is predicated on several assumptions. First, it is assumed that we believe that our test results should be used to help students learn. That is, we believe that what we test is important and local educators should teach students the skills which they have not already attained. Second, it is assumed that we believe that parents, taxpayers, board members and other members of the public have a right to know about their schools. Therefore, measures of schools such as test scores should be provided to these groups in a context which helps them understand the meaning of the scores. Third, most local educators (teachers, administrators, counselors and so forth) are not well trained in testing, and those who have

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* Development of Simple Ways for Using State Assessment Results - Presented at the Tenth Annual Large Scale Assessment Conference; June, 1980.

had courses on testing were taught how tests are constructed and how to read test reports, not use the results in instruction. Fourth, without training and motivation to use results, many local educators will ignore the results. This means that trainers must actively pursue training activities and motivate local educators to implement the training. Motivation can take many forms and the assessment program staff should use both positive means and avoidance of negative consequences to motivate local educators. Fifth, there are simple ways of using test results and these can be taught to local educators. That is, significant use of tests can be made by teachers and principals without additional training or the use of outside experts. Finally, the use of the results by the teachers and the principal and the reporting of the results at the district level to the school board and media and at the building level to the parents are very much interrelated.

Talking About the Results

It may seem odd to begin a discussion of using and reporting results with a description of ways to report them -- after all, how can we report something that we haven't determined the meaning of? What do we report? Yet, invariably, local educators report the test results without determining what they mean or what will be done as a consequence of them. Some local educators may even believe that reporting the results is the use of them.

You can recognize these districts quite easily. They are the ones that report scores to the local board, the news media, the local parent groups or other audiences in terms of gains or losses, percentile ranks or other normative comparisons. Improving scores or above average scores are emphasized, while the use of the results is ignored. The first person to ask why the scores improved or what will be done to improve them further is first to discover that the district-level or school-level official has no real idea about the significance of the results -- why they are so high or low and what can be done

to improve them. Districts with declining scores or below average results try to shun publicity, hoping to avoid the negative image such results will bring. The test reports of these districts are so thin that even the untrained lay citizen can see through them.

Using Test Results

What can be done to improve reporting? Improve the use of the results! The active steps to use the results will improve the reporting of the results as well. The use of results provides a context for the reports of results -- the "meat" of the reports.

There are two major ways to use assessment results at the building level. The first, is to use the results to help the students that are tested. Assuming that the test covers a representative set of skills and that the skills are realistic expectations for the students, the skills that students do not attain can provide a starting place for planning instruction. In order to do this most effectively, school staffs need to be taught that the instructional needs of students may not be always discernable from the skills that the student misses. These may only be indicators of underlying instructional needs. Some local districts (and states) have assisted this process by developing instructional support materials that include "diagnostic" tests to determine needs and instructional suggestions keyed to the different levels which students may be operating on. Supporting instructional materials are also presented.

The second way of using the test results is for curriculum review and instructional planning at the building level. Ideally, the building principal and all classroom teachers (at all grades) will participate as a building team. A three-step process was developed in Michigan to guide school staffs in using tests for this purpose (See Appendix B-1, 2 and 3). Step one is the determination of which skills tested present the greatest instructional need. Step two is the

identification of current instruction on these (and the other) skills at each of the previous grade levels. This may take the form of time spent on each skill, when during the school year that the instruction occurs, what text and other materials are used to teach the skills and so forth. Step three is the determination of immediate and longer term curricula goals. During the final step, staff will determine what changes in instruction should be made. If skills that students do poorly on are ones on which they have not received sufficient instruction, when should students receive additional instruction? When should the skill be introduced, reinforced and reviewed? Usually, these activities can be fit into normal instructional activities. On the other hand, on which skills can instructional time be reduced? If students are doing quite well, is excessive redundancy built into instruction? If so, this time can be used for the needed additional (or other) instruction.

The major direct benefit of this process is that teachers and the principals will have established a plan to use the test results -- a short-term plan for the students tested and a longer-term plan to modify curricula to meet student needs before they are tested. Indirect benefits of this process include: a coordinated instructional plan, a feeling of team participation among teachers, and increased communication among administrators, teachers, parents and students.

Reporting of Results

Once the school has determined how the results will be used, reporting the results makes more sense. Parents of students tested can be told by the classroom teacher what remedial instruction is planned. Parents of students not in the test group can be told how the school curricula will be modified to improve student achievement (See Appendix C). Citizens can be informed what the school

is trying to do, how well the school is doing it, and what will be done to improve it. This is particularly of interest to school board members and other citizens (See Appendix D).

The plan for reporting test results has three major parts. The first is to prepare the audience with information about the purpose of the program, how the results are being used and how the scores fit within the context of other information about the district or school. The background report, adapted from reporting to the news media, works equally well with other audiences such as the school board, parent groups and other lay audiences.

The purpose of these presentations is to prepare the group to understand the results. Because testing is unfamiliar to most individuals, preparation is needed to understand the reports. If scores are given out before the explanation is given, the group is less likely to hear and comprehend the message -- their attention will be diverted to the numbers and what they mean. Also, a message which is given twice (before and as scores are reported) is more likely to be heard and understood.

The background report should contain the basic facts of the assessment program and some sample test items. It might be interesting to administer a few sample test items to the group to give them a "realistic" idea of what the tests are like. In addition, the report should help the audience understand the relationship (or lack thereof) between outcomes as measured by tests or other means and inputs, such as instructional materials, staff and finances. Perhaps most important, the report should stress what has been and will be done with the results. This should be described in as concrete terms as possible, perhaps by having teachers report their plans. Some buildings that have been through the process described earlier could be used. Finally, the background report should conclude with the plan for the subsequent reports, so the group knows that more information will be coming.

The second type of report is the actual report of the test results. This report should be made in the simplest and briefest terms possible, emphasizing the use of audiovisual materials. Five key questions should be addressed:

A. How did we do this year?

B. Did achievement improve over last year?

C. If so, why?

D. If not, why not?

E. What will be done to review and use the results?

It is as important (if not more so) to discuss low results or declining scores as it is high or improving scores. The negative story will get out and its important to acknowledge it and be prepared to do something about it.

The final type of report is the follow-up report. This report is used to inform the group of action taken or decisions made subsequent to the background report or the report of the results. This report may focus on specific curricula selected for review, results of this review process, new instructional activities implemented as a result of the review or special activities implemented as a result of testing -- awards, summer remedial programs, and so forth.

When planning the campaign to use and report the test results, it may be useful to think in terms of the events which must be carried out. Appendix E shows some of the major events which take place before, during and after testing and the reporting activities connected with each testing activity. Also shown is a sample schedule for the reporting activities and a list of audiences who are interested/concerned about the test results. By planning the use and reporting of test scores in advance, users can more firmly tie the use and reporting together.

Summary

Local educators often state their lack of training or the lack of time or money as excuses for not using and reporting results. These activities for reporting and using test scores have been developed with these constraints in mind. The reporting of assessment scores is dependent on the use of the scores, but each activity reinforces the other. When professional staff take the time to determine meaning of the scores, the resultant insight can form the basis of reports of the results to many audiences. By increasing the level of knowledge of various professional and lay groups, support for the schools' instructional programs is increased. Thus, testing can serve as a vehicle to both improve educational opportunities of students and communicate what is good about schools (and our commitment to change what isn't so good) to various important audiences. State assessment program staffs can help local districts learn these simple techniques.

SECTION II

USING MEAP TEST RESULTS

In this section, a number of suggestions will be given concerning the uses of MEAP results. For the sake of convenience, these uses have been grouped at the district, school, and individual student levels. This arbitrary means of subdividing a coordinated school district and building effort to use the tests results was adopted to point out the different responsibilities of district-level, school-level, and classroom personnel. A number of resource materials have been developed to assist local educators in using and reporting MEAP results. A list of these resources and instructions for acquiring them are given in Appendix F.

District Level Use

What Should Be Done?

District officials should

- Provide leadership and direction to the staff;
- Interpret MEAP test results as they relate to the total district program; and
- Communicate results in this context to the school board and the community at large.

Why?

- The interest of district-level administrators and curriculum specialists will encourage building-level administrators and teachers to use assessment results.
- The importance of interpretation cannot be overemphasized. The educational assessment program provides a large amount of information. Teachers, principals, and other district personnel should reach an understanding of what the assessment data means to them. In the absence of an "official" interpretation, newspaper reporters, citizens, parents, or students will provide their own meanings of the data. If these interpretations are improper or based on limited information, they may be difficult for school personnel to correct.
- The manner in which MEAP test results are shared by district officials will have a significant impact on the overall usefulness of the results. **Act, don't react.**

How Is Leadership And Direction Provided To Staff?

- Distribute school level assessment results to school staff promptly.
- Hold one or more briefings for central office staff and school staff to present and discuss results in detail. Emphasize what has been accomplished and what should be addressed.
  - In larger districts, it may be useful to hold school-by-school briefings for entire professional staff during which district and the specific school results are discussed. What the district plans to do with the results and expects the school to do should also be communicated.
- Encourage school staff to use school level MEAP results and to distribute the Pamphlet for Parents.

How Can Results Be Related To Total Program?

- Examine district MEAP results to determine how students performed.

- Examine and compare the results of other district-level measures of achievement.

- Prepare a written report which includes the complete assessment results. Highlight both the strengths and weaknesses. The report should also include interpretations, implications, and the plan of action. Make the report available to anyone who wants to understand or analyze the MEAP results in depth.

- Prepare a presentation which gives the total picture of the district's instructional and evaluation programs showing MEAP within the context of other testing done in the district.

How Should Meap Test Results Be Communicated To Various Audiences?

- Determine the audiences to whom the information should be communicated and what they would be most interested in knowing. These audiences will probably include administration and school staffs, parents, media representatives, and the community at large.

- Adjust the emphasis, length, and content of the presentation to make it meaningful and clear to the audience being addressed.

- For the school board:

  * The board will want to be shown the strengths and weaknesses in overall student performance. The district can present the objective by objective results contained in the District Summary, highlighting strengths and weaknesses.

  * As areas for improvement are identified, preliminary plans for correcting deficiencies should be presented. The board can then identify priority areas and consider possible reallocations of district resources.

  * Plan and adapt your board presentation accordingly.

- For the community at large:

  * Capitalize on public interest—past experience has shown that the public reporting of MEAP test results generates a lot of interest. Take advantage of this excellent opportunity to improve public relations.

  * **Act, don't react**—release MEAP test results promptly and in the context of your total school program. Report early, report honestly, report fully, and provide information about what the district/school is doing to make achievement even better. This should reduce occasions when reaction to negative newspaper reports are necessary. Let the public know how you are doing on the assessment tests and more importantly, what you are doing in your schools to give students a quality education.

  * Prepare a brief, clear release which can be used by the news media. Photographs of students actively engaged in learning are excellent ways to show the positive aspects of schools.

  * Initiate an ongoing dialogue with the media to keep them informed of what is going on in the district during the course of the entire year.

  * Respond to all inquiries in a positive, honest manner. Even if the results are less than "glowing", acknowledge needs openly and indicate the plans for improvement or steps that are already underway to correct deficiencies. Be sure to mention areas which have shown improvement over a period of time.

  * Use the MEAP presentation as an opportunity to generate parents' interest in their children's educational progress. Awareness of the larger school environment and the context in which testing is done helps to enlist school support.

- A manual entitled "Presenting MEAP" has been developed to assist districts in reporting results to the school board and the general public. The manual outlines twenty steps that can be taken to explain the proper uses and limits of MEAP. The manual also suggests how to report district MEAP results and how to look for and find other interesting elements of the school district programs, which when reported, help give a truer picture of district performance (or of the school district.) See Appendix F.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN INTERPRETING MEAP TEST RESULTS

1. In the Objectives, the word "will" is either used or implied. This does not mean that the state is mandating that the student will do something or must, by Department edict, learn a particular bit of information. The use of the term "will" simply means that as a demonstration of objective attainment, a student will be able to do what is stated in the objective.

2. The performance objectives assessed by the test items are minimal objectives. Therefore, these objectives do not cover the entire range of skills that educators would consider important for many students to know in mathematics and reading at the beginning of fourth, seventh and tenth grade. In addition, local school districts may have other important objectives which are unique to the local district.

3. Only selected objectives from the total set of minimal performance objectives in mathematics and reading are tested. Therefore, educators should not assume that students have attained all minimal objectives, even if they attained all objectives tested this year.

4. The minimal performance objectives are a guide to expectations for student performance. Some youngsters may not attain some of the objectives until later than may be the usual case. Individual student characteristics should be kept in mind when interpreting test results to parents.

5. The criterion for objective attainment was set by the State Board of Education. Local educators may feel that for some objectives, or some students, the criterion is too high or too low. This should be considered when interpreting results.

6. Low scores on the assessment test should not be regarded as an indication that a school or classroom is inefficient or uninspiring to students. Low scores are an indication that there are educational needs present. However, low scores do not say what caused these needs.

7. Test results and performance objectives should be related to the instructional materials and curriculum being used in the school the student is attending. Parents should be made aware of the context in which the testing has been done. Awareness of the larger school environment should help understanding of student performance by the parent.

8. Explain to parents the role they can play in their child's education. The minimal performance objectives and MEAP test results are being explained to them for the benefit of their child's education.

School Level Use

Much is known about the use of test results to improve student achievement. Appendix D, for example, lists several major principles that research has shown are related to improved school achievement. Because achievement occurs at the classroom and school building levels, though, the building principal and all classroom teachers determine the extent to which test results are used to help students. Models for using and reporting MEAP and other test results have been developed. These methods were developed in schools and are based on realistic resource constraints. Schools have used these models in the past and each is described in this section. Attending to specific curriculum and instructional needs is the job of all teachers, not just the fourth, seventh and tenth grade teachers.

Why Use MEAP?

- MEAP test results provide valuable information on the status of basic skills education in schools.
- MEAP is a reliable vehicle for improving the educational quality of each Michigan public school and benefits all students, both individually and collectively.
- MEAP helps detect trends and patterns in the performance of students.
- MEAP helps match skill needs with curriculum and instructional programs.
- MEAP helps teachers focus directly upon the minimum skill needs of students.
- MEAP helps teachers plan group and individual instruction.

Who Should Be Involved?

- The School Principal should provide the leadership and direction in this team effort.
- School personnel should use MEAP test results to help address the following areas of concern:
  - Identify the skill needs of students tested.
  - Review the curriculum and instructional programs.
  - Establish instructional priorities for the school year.
  - Involve parents in the educational process.
- Parents can use the MEAP results to determine the child's progress in acquiring basic math and reading skills.

How Should The Principal Provide Leadership And Direction?

- The principal's major responsibilities are to:
  - Hand out test results to staff promptly.
  - Organize and direct the MEAP School Utilization Team.
  - Show enthusiasm and concern for the improvement of student achievement.
  - Give assistance and support to the staff in their efforts to enhance the school curriculum and instructional programs.
  - Report school test results and a proposed plan of action to parents.

How Should The School Team Use MEAP Results?

- The school team's major responsibilities are to:
  - Explore staff expectations of the students.
  - Examine test results to identify problems and needs.
  - Conduct a curriculum and instructional program review to determine current strategies used to teach the skills that are tested.
  - Make decisions, set goals and devise a plan of action to address needs (based upon findings).
- The MEAP School Utilization Team should include at least one representative from each grade level and/or curriculum area, as well as each area of support services.
  - In small schools, full staff participation is feasible.
  - In large schools, grade-level teams (K-3, 4-6, 7-9) may be a better alternative.
- The emphasis of the team should be on people pulling together in an agreed upon direction to determine needs.
- A positive approach is needed to assure that changes agreed upon are implemented with care and concern for improvement.
- Instructional changes can be made most easily when the school staff is involved in the change.
- Two-way communication is important and everyone should be aware of what everyone else is doing, in terms of what, where and when skills are taught, what needs each perceives, and finally, how each can help the other.

What Resources Are Available For The Staff Effort?

- Materials have been developed to help school staffs use MEAP test results. They are easy to use and can be adapted for use in different types of schools.
  - A flyer entitled "Principals and Teachers: The Building Team" has been included in the School Coordinator's Manual. This is a good introductory document for staff. It provides suggestions on what should be done before, during and after the tests are administered.
  - The *MEAP Curriculum Review Model* can be put into operation in three sessions. For each session, the goals, materials needed, and approximate time and process agenda are outlined. The first session deals with examining the results, identifying the skills of greatest concern and setting a realistic criterion level. The second session reviews the curriculum and instructional program to determine what is currently being done. The last session is a decision making, goal setting activity to improve the student attainment of the basic skills.
  - *Objective matrices* are helpful analysis tools. The matrices list each objective in reading and mathematics for grades four, seven, and ten. They have multiple uses, such as prioritizing objectives, examining the instructional program (what is taught—when, where, and at what grade level) and addressing needs (reference text books, grade level programs, etc.).
  - The *MEAP Parent Reporting Model* provides suggestions for staff preparation, three ways of distributing the MEAP Pamphlet for Parents, and reporting the test results. Each model contains the goals, materials, anticipated time, participants, and outlines the steps to be taken.

- — **Model A, Individual Parent/Teacher Conferences**, is recommended. It personalizes the results, provides for two-way communication, and gets parents involved.

- — **Model B, Group PTA Meetings**, has the advantage of putting MEAP into the larger context of the total school program.

- — **Model C**, to mail or send the Pamphlet for Parents home with the student is the least desirable method of reporting. However, something is better than nothing when communicating with parents.

* A sample *MEAP/PTA Meeting* has been prepared in an open-ended script format. It includes what should be said, by whom, when, what should be done, and how long it should take.

* The film *"Building Better Basics: The Home School Partnership"* should be useful in any parent-teacher meeting, school board meeting, or other community meetings. This 12-minute film was designed for parents to encourage them to take an interest in their children's education.

STEPS THE SCHOOL TEAM MAY WANT TO CONSIDER WHEN USING MEAP TEST RESULTS

1. **Using the School Summary Report, examine objective attainment levels.**
2. **Using the Feeder School Report, examine the objective attainment levels of students who are no longer in the building.**
3. **Establish an acceptable criterion level of attainment for the school.**
4. **List in priority order all objectives (from both the School Summary Report and the Feeder School Report) falling below the acceptable criterion level set in #3.**
5. **Determine where the MEAP objectives are currently being taught in the instructional sequence in the building and what instructional materials are used.**
6. **Identify the present needs.**
7. **Make decisions, set goals, and outline a plan of action. Share the plan with the full staff.**
8. **Initiate a plan of action.**
9. **Set up an evaluation mechanism.**

Individual Student Use

How can MEAP Test Results Be Used To Help Individual Students Tested?

- The responsibility of using MEAP test results to focus attention on the specific minimal skill needs of individual students falls on different staff members in different school situations (grade level teachers, content area teachers, counselors, etc.):
  - In **elementary schools** this responsibility is most frequently that of the fourth grade teachers.
  - In **secondary schools** this responsibility is often not assumed by, nor assigned to, anyone. If, however, individual students are to receive needed help, the responsibility must be assigned and carried out.
- Before using MEAP test results to help an individual student, the following questions should be answered:
  - What are the MEAP objectives? (reading and mathematics, grades four, seven, and ten.)
  - Are the objectives tested part of the curriculum in earlier or later grades?
  - Where are the objectives introduced, taught, reviewed?
  - Which objectives are most important, at this point in time, for this student?
  - What is the best approach to instruction?
- The same steps outlined in the *MEAP Curriculum Review Model* can be applied when using the individual student and classroom data. The results must be examined and needs identified (using the **Classroom Listing Report** and the **Individual Student Report**), criterion levels determined, curriculum reviewed, and goals set, etc.

What Resources Are Available For Helping Individual Students Tested?

- The flyer entitled "Understanding and Using the Individual Student Report" explains why the test was given, what the report means, and how the results can be used to identify skill weaknesses. It can be used by teachers in conferences with students and parents. It can also be used by students examining their Individual Student Report independently. The flyer can be removed from the handbook and duplicated (see Appendix E).
- The instructional support materials can be used as a tool to inservice local personnel or as a resource by individual teachers.
  - MATHEMATICS: Five areas of instruction (Fractions, Decimals, Ratio and Proportions, Percent and Whole Number Computation) have been addressed in two sets of mathematics materials. These materials were prepared to assist teachers whose students are having difficulties in one or more of these areas.
  - READING: For grades 4 and 7 the support materials contain information about areas of reading which caused problems for students on the MEAP tests. A pending addition to these materials will provide instructional ideas for the current reading objectives.

    The secondary level support materials identify a process for disseminating MEAP reading results to various departments in a high school. These materials include examples of reading objectives and instructional procedures and strategies within content areas.
  - **Other:** Materials have also been developed in other subject areas and specifically for secondary schools (see Appendix F).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN HELPING INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

1. Students want to know their test results as soon as possible.
2. Students appreciate explanations and interpretations of their results and usually respond positively to concern and encouragement.
3. Individual student characteristics should be kept in mind when interpreting test results.
4. Individual student needs may vary from school priorities.
5. The amount of instruction time is limited (remediation versus teaching new skills).
6. Individual students with the same needs can be grouped for instruction.
7. Some types of remediation can be integrated into on-going activities.
8. A plan of action to address needs must be developed and communicated to students and parents.
9. Test results and performance objectives should be related to the instructional materials and curriculum being used in the school.

SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR A UTILIZATION OF MEAP TEST RESULTS WORKSHOP

I. Things to be Considered When Planning a Utilization Workshop

1. The school unit is a key element in the utilization of assessment data.
2. The emphasis is on having people pull together in an agreed upon direction.
3. Instructional changes can be made most easily when the school staff is involved in the changes.
4. Soliciting full staff participation however, is easier said than done.
5. The department has developed a MEAP test results utilization model which is adaptable to most situations, and certified MRA trainers are available to conduct workshops, upon request.
6. The MEAP utilization model can be put into operation in 3 sessions which involve from 2½ to 4 hours. Of course, it includes an uncalculated amount of individual effort.

II. Organizing a School Team

A. Size - will vary depending upon building size and/or method used to select team members.

B. Participants -
   (1) Should include at least a representative sample
   (2) If possible, the entire staff should be involved.

III. Things to be Considered in Organizing a MEAP Utilization School Team

1. Organizational structure of the school
2. Contractual agreements, as to meeting times and lengths
3. Preliminary information sessions with key support personnel (such as: administrators, department chairpersons, curriculum specialist, remedial specialist, assist principals, etc.)
4. Who will conduct meeting(s)
5. How the team membership will be determined--a) mandatory, b) voluntary, c) other
6. How many team members are needed? The school team should include at least a representative cross section of the staff (i.e., 1-administrator, 1-teacher, 1-curriculum specialist, etc.)
7. Staff-Faculty attitude toward testing--a) negative, b) positive, c) neutral, d) no knowledge
8. Brief description of proposed activity at total staff-faculty meeting.
9. Team meeting date, place and time.

IV. Materials Necessary (Provided by Requesting School)

1. Copies for each team member--a) School Summary, b) District Summary, c) State Summary
2. Classroom Listing Report for 4th, 7th and 10th grade teachers
3. MEAP Handbooks (for reference)

A MODEL FOR

UTILIZATION OF MEAP TEST RESULTS

Session I

Examining Results and Identifying Present Needs

Goals:

In terms of basic skills attainment in Reading and Math:

1. School teams will be able to read, understand and interpret MEAP test results forms.
2. School teams will be able to determine where the school stands in relation to their district and state.
3. School teams will be able to make a realistic criterion selection.
4. School teams will be able to identify school problem areas and determine present needs.

Materials: (Copies for Everyone)

School Summary Report
District Summary Report
State Summary Report

Time:

1-2 hours.

Group Size:

1. Will vary, dependent upon: staff size, method of selection.
2. Should include:
   (a) Total instructional staff (if possible).
   (b) Principal and 1 Teacher per grade (minimum).
   (c) A large Building Team could be subgrouped (K-3, 4-6, 7-9).

Process:

1. Introduce activity briefly, explaining goals of the activity. (These could be written on a chalkboard, on transparencies or on news print.)
2. Review types, format and content of report forms.
3. Compare to District Summary
4. Compare to State Summary

} for general information and to establish a frame of reference, not to establish needs in comparative terms.

A MODEL FOR CURRICULUM & PROGRAM REVIEW USING MEAP TEST RESULTS

Session II
Curriculum and Instructional Planning

Goals:

1. School teams will examine present school needs of 4th, 7th, and 10th graders, summarized from previous meeting.
2. Teachers will complete objective matrix to determine present status of building-wide curriculum and instructional program.
3. Building teams will identify which objectives are school-wide priority and which are individual classroom priority.

Materials: (copies for everyone)

Summary of Present Needs and School Criterion Levels

Blank matrix sheets for each participant (matrix for reproduction)

Classroom Listing Reports for 4th, 7th, and 10th grade teachers

MEAP Handbook (optional)

Time:

1-2 hours

Group Size:

Building Teams

Process:

1. Introduce activity briefly, explaining goals of the activity.
2. a. 4th, 7th, and 10th grade teachers examine Classroom Listing Report to find priority objectives.

   b. All other teachers complete objective matrix. Matrix multiple uses: 1)Hours per year taught 2)Prioritize 1-5 3)Introduce/teach/review 4)Reference text book, etc. There should be a correlation between time spent and attainment. Collect and make composite of results, examples: record all times and average each grade, make a composite for each grade, etc. Be sure to differenciate between teach/learn.
3. Chairperson collects objective matrices and assigns responsibility of completion and reproducing for next meeting.
4. Determine whether or not 4th, 7th, and 10th grade classroom priorities are the same as the school priorities.
5. If necessary, building team examines MEAP Handbook to determine whether or not students have appropriate skills to attain the objectives as measured by the specific items.
6. A decision must be made as to the allocation of special attention to be given to objectives in the school and in the classroom.
7. The building team may want to distribute the objectives across grade levels.

8. **Team assignment:** In preparation for the next meeting, principal and teachers will collect resource information on priority objectives, e.g. what textbook materials, supplementary materials, games, etc. are available for focused attention. Anything new, unique, or different on any priority objective.

9. The individual matrices must be collected, compiled into a composite, and copies of the composite picture made for each team member for the next meeting. This task should be definitely assigned. Separate composits for grades K-3, 4-6, or 7-9 may be helpful in schools with large grade spans.

A MODEL FOR
CURRICULUM & PROGRAM REVIEW USING MEAP TEST RESULTS

Session III
Decision Making - Setting Goals

Goals:

1. Building team will examine objective matrix composite to determine teaching priority devoted to various objectives.
2. Building team will make decision to change (or not change) school curriculum or instruction program.
3. Building team will form a plan of action for work on school and classroom objective priorities--short term and long term.
4. Building team will share findings about instructional sources and methods.
5. Building team will determine the need for "outside" assistance.

Materials:

Composite objectives matrix(s) (copies for everyone)

School Summary Reports (from Session I)

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Building team

Process:

1. Introduce activity briefly, explain goals.
2. Hand out the objective matrix(s), and note objectives which have high priority and low priority, in terms of amount of instructional time allocated, etc.
3. Have building team examine objectives previously selected as short term and long term priorities.
4. Building team should determine whether or not a change should be made in the instructional priorities, based on assessment results.
5. Building team should decide which objectives will be given special attention immediately with short term remediation goals.
6. Building team should decide which objectives will be given special attention as long term curriculum changes and instructional program changes.
7. Building team should share information about materials and sources. Are all priority objectives covered? (List where and how.) Are more resources needed?
8. School teams should know whether or not they need "outside" assistance and what changes in curriculum materials and so forth are needed.
9. Develop a plan to "evaluate" effectiveness of planned changes.
10. A timeline should be developed.
11. Follow-up reporting, as needed, should also be put on a timeline.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUILDING TEAM

I. Format

These recommendations are based upon a comparison of staff expectations and student performance on the assessment tests.

Activity Coordinator: _____

OBJECTIVE CODE/DESCRIPTION	ACTIVITY PLAN
	Meeting Schedule: _____ Participants: _____ Activity: _____ Expected Outcome: _____

II. Meeting Schedule

1. Length and number of meetings will vary depending upon assigned task.
2. Schedule a one hour organizational meeting (time, place, agenda).
3. Subsequent meetings: discretion of participants.

III. Participants

1. Number and configuration will vary depending upon:
   a. staff size
   b. organizational structure of the school
   c. number and type of objectives identified, etc.
2. Full staff involvement is recommended. (The total staff need not be involved in all activities, but each staff member should participate in some aspect of the utilization process.)
   a. grade level grouping
   b. department grouping
   c. interest grouping, etc.

IV. Activities

1. Further data analysis using the School Test Item Analysis Report and/or other available data.
2. Integrating the objectives into the instructional program by content area.
3. Focus instructional program on the teaching of enabling skills that lend to attainment of objectives measured by the tests.
4. Develop or obtain materials and techniques to teach the skills that are not attained.
5. Determine how objectives can be better taught in the future.

V. Expected Outcome

1. Curriculum review and revision
2. Instructional program changes
3. Selecting appropriate activities and materials
4. Time line and evaluation plan

SCHOOL PRIORITY LISTING

Steps for Completing Format:

1. **Place objectives in the three categories (Critical, Important, Useful) based upon their importance to school goals and objectives.**
2. **Within each category, prioritize the listed objectives.**

Reading Objectives

Critical	
Important	
Useful	

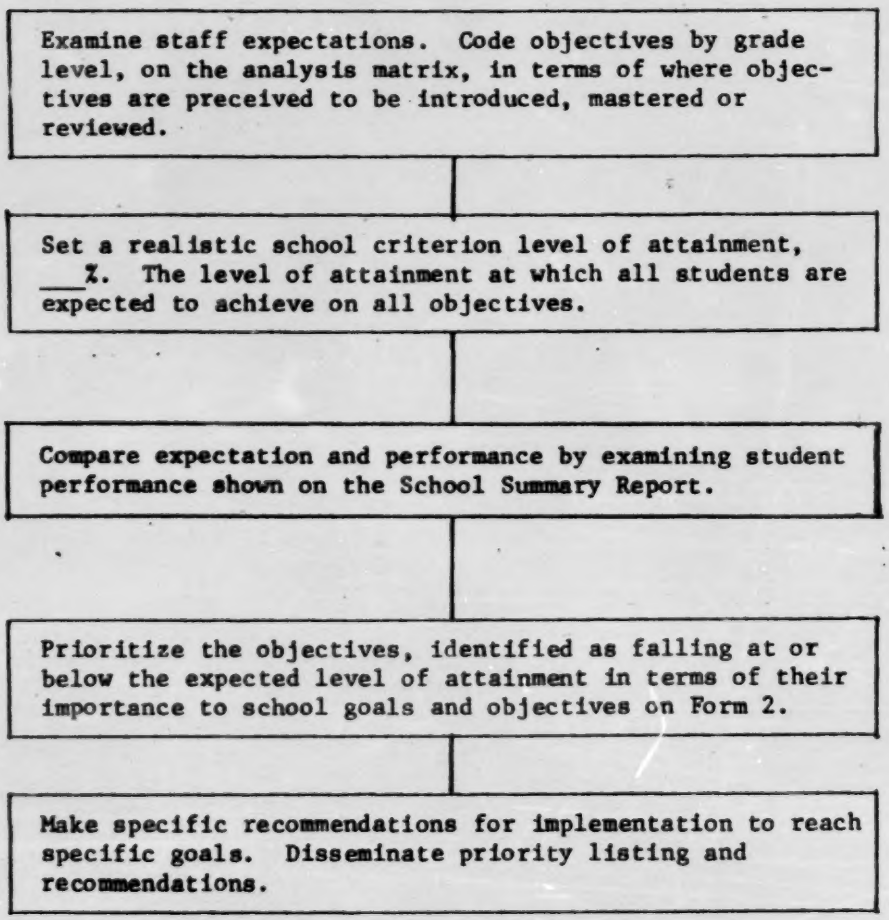
•••

USING THE 7TH & 10TH GRADE MEAP TESTS RESULTS
(School Level)

•••

The following is a suggested process which will provide a fast and easy way for the MEAP Building Team to interpret MEAP test results, draw initial implications, and make recommendations by comparing staff expectations and student performance.

ANALYSIS FLOW CHART


Examine staff expectations. Code objectives by grade level, on the analysis matrix, in terms of where objectives are preceived to be introduced, mastered or reviewed.
Set a realistic school criterion level of attainment, ___%. The level of attainment at which all students are expected to achieve on all objectives.
Compare expectation and performance by examining student performance shown on the School Summary Report.
Prioritize the objectives, identified as falling at or below the expected level of attainment in terms of their importance to school goals and objectives on Form 2.
Make specific recommendations for implementation to reach specific goals. Disseminate priority listing and recommendations.

ANALYSIS MATRIX
Reading Performance Objectives

OBJ. CODE	SKILL AREA & OBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION	GRADES TESTED 4	7	10
	VOCABULARY MEANING			
IA	Prefixes	•	•	•
IB	Suffixes	•		
IC	Multiple Meanings	•	•	•
ID	Synonyms	•	•	•
IE	Antonyms	•	•	•
IF	Context	•	•	•
	LITERAL COMPREHENSION			
IIA	Fill in Blanks (Close procedure)			
IIB	Main Idea	•	•	•
IIC	Main Idea Details	•	•	•
IID	Recall			
IIE	Sequence	•	•	•
IIF	Cause/Effect	•	•	•
IIG	Likeness/Difference	•	•	•
IIH	Sentence Meaning (punctuation)			
	INFERENTIAL COMPREHENSION			
IIIA	Main Idea	•	•	•
IIIB	Cause/Effect	•	•	•
IIIC	Probable Outcome	•	•	•
IIID	Main Idea Details	•	•	•
IIIE	Sequence	•	•	•
IIIF	Likeness/Difference	•		•
IIIG	Conclusions	•	•	•
IIIH	Analogies	•	•	•
III I	Characters	•		

OBJ. CODE	SKILL AREA & OBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION	GRADES TESTED 4	7	10
	CRITICAL READING SKILLS			
IVA	Author's Purpose	•	•	•
IVB	Fantasy/Reality			•
IVC	Author's Viewpoint		•	•
	RELATED STUDY SKILLS			
VA	Reference, Awareness	•	•	•
VB	Reference, Use	•	•	•
VC	Follow Directions			
VD	Summarizing	•	•	•
VE	Outline			
VF	Alphabetizing	•	•	
	POSITIVE RESPONSE/READING			
VIA	Read in Free Time	•	•	•
VIB	Visit Reading Places	•	•	•
VIC	Request Extra Reading	•	•	•
VID	Talk About Reading	•	•	•
VIE	Participate in Creative Activities			

SUGGESTED WAYS OF SHARING MEAP TEST RESULTS WITH SECONDARY STUDENTS

In the upper grades, seventh and particularly tenth, where students are tested, they may or may not have a Mathematics and/or a Reading class. It is therefore, necessary to arrange a direct link between the test results and students. The staff responsible for this linkage may vary, depending upon school organization and structure. The following activities are suggested to meet this need:

1. Conduct test debriefing sessions with students in which they can discuss and ask questions about the tests.

2. Stimulate student interest in tests results by explaining how the results will be used and when they can be expected. (Example: publicize on school bulletin boards, through the public address system, and/or the student news media.)

3. Distribute actual results upon receipt. Allow students to examine and discuss their Individual Student Report. Student insight may prove useful in the diagnostic process.

4. It is important to provide students with an explanation and interpretation of their scores. Students are usually most concerned with whether they passed or failed. It is recommended, however, that "strong emphasis be placed on explaining the skills a student has or has not learned" rather than the number of right and wrong responses.

5. Provide encouragement and a suggested plan of action to address identified needs.

Suggested Implementation Plan to Address Identified Student Needs in Reading

Student Name _____

A. Results of MEAP Data Analysis.

1. Objectives not attained on MEAP (Circle all that apply):

I A B C D E F
II A B C D E F G H .
III A B C D E F G H I
IV A B C
V A B C D E F

2. Areas in reading in which student is least proficient:

Vocabulary _____
Literal Comprehension _____
Inferential Comprehension _____
Critical Reading _____
Study Skills _____

B. Other Pertinent Available Data.

1. A list of reading services the student is receiving:

2. Results of other tests and evaluation tools:

	Results
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. Last grade received in these content areas:

Social Studies _____
Science _____
English _____
Mathematics _____
_____ _____
(Other)

C. Recommended Program Plan.

1. Schedule Planning Conference

a. Set date
b. Identify participants (principal, counselor, reading consultant, content area teachers, parents, and/or student(s).

2. Establish instructional goals for student.

a.
b.

3. Select appropriate classes, activities, and/or materials:

a.
b.
c.

4. Identify person(s) responsible for the program:

a.
b.

Reporting MEAP Results to Parents

Staff Preparation

I. Complete School Staff

A. Review school results, total school staff, a team approach.

B. Implement the "Model for Utilization of MEAP Test Results" to:

1. Determine if curriculum or instructional changes are needed.
2. Formulate a plan of action--short term and long term--to share with the parent(s)--not necessarily operational at the time of sharing school-wide, grade level, classroom, individual.

II. Classroom Teacher of Students Tested

A. Be familiar with what is tested, why it is tested and how the results are reported.

B. Review each student's results--highlight strengths and weaknesses for discussion with the parent(s).

C. Develop plans for needed remediation. Focus on ways to involve the parent(s), if possible.

D. Review Classroom Listing Report.

E. Select one/several priority objectives for the class and prepare list (including why these skills were selected--objective attainment rates).

F. Develop brief statement of instructional plans and goals as these relate to the instructional practices the selected priority objectives and other relevant information.

Reporting MEAP Results to Parents

Model A

Individual Parent/Teacher Conferences
(MDE Recommended Method of Distribution)

Goals:

1. To provide the parent(s) with a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses in the basic skills of Reading and Mathematics.

2. To provide the parent(s) with a "Plan of Action" designed to address the identified weaknesses.

3. To solicit the assistance of the parent(s) in helping their child learn the skills needed.

Materials:

Classroom Listing Report (maintain confidentiality of other student's results)
Individual Student Report
Plan of Action (Class/Group/Individual)
Individualized Parent Pamphlet
MEAP Handbook
List of Priority Objectives

Time: Approximately 20-30 minutes

Participants:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Parents

Process:

1. Give a brief overview of the MEAP test:
   a. what is tested (R & M)
   b. why the test is given
   c. how the results are reported (i.e. by specific skills/objectives)
   d. what the results mean (i.e. identification of strengths and needs)

2. Use information in the Parent Pamphlet to explain a child's specific strengths and weaknesses in skill areas tested.

3. Use Individual Student Report, only if necessary, to further explain strengths and problems.

4. Use MEAP Handbook to give examples of test items and objectives.

5. Indicate plans to remediate weaknesses (involve parent(s), if possible or desirable):
   a. indicate remediation teacher will provide in class.
   b. suggest plan of action parent can follow at home.

6. Give overview of areas of strengths and weaknesses of entire class/groups within class and related instructional plans.

7. Indicate follow-up teacher will provide to update the parent(s) on their child's progress and performance.

Reporting MEAP Results to Parents

Model B

Group PTA Meeting

Goals:

1. To provide the parent(s) with a clear understanding of MEAP--why the MEAP tests are given, what is tested and how the results are reported.

2. To discuss the overall instructional plan and achievement goals for the school and specific grade levels as they relate to the MEAP test results (and other available information, if possible).

Materials:

Film (optional): "Building Better Basics--A Home/School Partnership" (available from local REMC)
Transparencies
1. State Summary
2. District Summary
3. School Summary
4. Parent Pamphlet

Handouts
Parent Pamphlet (Individual Student's)
List of Priority Objectives for Grade Levels

Time: Approximately 1-2 hours

Participants:

1. School Instructional Staff (Principal, Teachers, Support Staff)
2. Parents

Process:

1. Ask PTA to sponsor a Parents' Night (or have school host) with staff available to meet with the individual parent(s) after a general presentation.

2. Have school principal give overview of MEAP testing program:
   a. what is tested;
   b. why it's tested; and
   c. how the results are reported (for school & district, as well as classroom and individual). (Use transparencies #1, 2 and 3.)

3. Have teachers given overview of areas of strengths and weaknesses of entire grade level using List of Priority Objectives.

4. Have teachers discuss instructional plans and goals as they relate to Priority Objectives (and other available information)

5. Show parent film.

6. Answer general questions.

7. Explain Parent Pamphlet. (Transparency #4)

8. Distribute Parent Pamphlet.

9. Have staff present (both counselors and teachers) to discuss individual student results with the parent(s) as outlined in Model A, Individual Parent/Teacher Conference.

10. Mail Parent Pamphlet to the parent(s) who did not attend, as described in Model C.

Reporting MEAP Results to Parents

Model C

Mail to the Home or Send Home with Student (Least Desirable Method of Distribution)

Goals:

1. To provide the parent(s) with a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses in the basic skills of Reading and Mathematics.

2. To communicate the overall instructional plan and achievement goals for the school and specific grade levels as they relate to the MEAP test results (and other available information, if possible).

3. To encourage the parent(s) to come to the school to discuss their child's MEAP test results and instructional plans.

Materials:

Cover Letter
Parent Pamphlet

Time: Will vary depending upon preparation involved

Participants:

1. Will vary depending upon dissemination source (teacher, counselor, principal, central office, etc.)
2. Parents of Students Tested

Process:

1. Mail or send home with child, the Parent Pamphlet
   a. Prepare letter to accompany pamphlet
      1) brief statement of what is tested and why
      2) brief summary of child's strengths and weaknesses
      3) brief statement of remediation plans
         a) to be provided by teacher in classroom; and
         b) plan of action parent can follow to assist student at home.

      4) encourage the parent(s) to arrange a meeting with the teacher/ counselor to discuss their child's MEAP test results in greater depth.

      5) Indicate what follow-up will be provided to apprise the parent(s) of their child's progress and performance.

REPORTING TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Ideas for Presenting MEAP to Local School Boards

Edward D. Roeber

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important audiences to which assessment results are reported to is the local school board. Presenting test results to the school board and to lay citizens is a most important and challenging activity. The results must be reported simply and clearly for understanding. The reports should fully explain the assessment and put the results in the context of other information about the schools, e.g., curricula emphases, resource allocations, as well as, other school output indicators.

This guide has been prepared to share some ideas regarding the types of reports which can be made to school boards. These ideas should be viewed as suggestions to build upon -- they are not the only ones which will work, nor will every one apply to or be needed by every school district. Special circumstances will dictate special reporting. It is hoped that these suggestions will form the basis of your reporting program. The Assessment staff welcomes suggestions about other ideas that work. We'd like to pass these on in future editions of this publication.

BACKGROUNDING THE BOARD

The school board members will have a wide range of knowledge about school outcomes, testing, and, more specifically, MEAP. A board briefing should provide enough information about MEAP and testing so members can spot

inaccuracies and misinterpretations if they occur in published accounts of the results. MEAP has attempted to correct some of the misinterpretations of MEAP results that are printed in newspapers, but these attempts are not always successful. Your board members usually are well respected local leaders who can be very valuable in explaining the results in the community, and if need be, to correct misinformation. The board briefing is to prepare them for this role.

How to prepare them? Adopt a technique that works well with the news media--a background briefing. Schedule a few minutes to discuss testing without presenting the scores to distract them. This will allow you to discuss the purpose of the testing program independently of their natural concerns about whether the scores have improved or declined. The briefing will also provide an opportunity to discuss with the board what will be done with the results, before the results are received and while there is still time to modify the plan as needed.

Preparing the Background Briefing Report

There are several things to do in preparing for the background briefing. First, it will be useful to have the basic facts about assessment written down, so such things as number of objectives, items, and so forth are not overly confusing. Second, describe the purpose of MEAP succinctly. A slide-tape presentation has been put together to help you do this. Although it covers how to report MEAP results, the presentation is particularly good for lay audiences who need a "non-jargon" explanation. The slide/tape is available on a limited loan basis by contacting the Assessment staff at (517) 373-8393. If this is not used, you may wish to use a Parent Pamphlet (with data deleted) as a good, simple explanation of the State assessment program.

It may also be useful to show the school board a few of the test items. The MEAP Handbook contains a section with sample test items. These items, which are not drawn from the actual test, can be useful with the school board or other audiences to give a flavor of the test at each grade level. It may also be informative to put together a thirty-item test drawn from each grade level to illustrate how the items become more complex from fourth to seventh to tenth grade.

Third, because some boards of education may not have experience in looking at outcomes of schools or in distinguishing outcomes and inputs, it may be useful to review the materials shown in Appendix A before discussing output measure such as MEAP with the board. The exercise shown can be used with a variety of audiences to "test" the differences between inputs and outputs. Such an exercise could be used as a spring board for a discussion of how input and outputs may or may not be related. Boards of education are often interested in this topic and discussing it before results are given may assist you in covering the topic completely.

Fourth, be prepared to discuss what will be done with the results. Since it is mostly the responsibility of building principals and classroom teachers to use the results, one effective strategy is to involve several teams of principals and classroom teachers to show how the results have been and will be used. This presentation should focus on a) the use of MEAP results with the students (and parents of students) tested and b) the use of the results to review and modify the curricula in the areas tested. This will serve to focus the attention of the school board on the instructional use of the results.

Finally, the background briefing should conclude with a discussion of the district plan to report the results (when will the school board get

the district-level and state-level results; when will the media receive a report of the results?) and to encourage buildings to use the results (how will principals and teachers be encouraged to use the results?).

In summary, then, the background briefing for the school board should contain these parts:

A. Introduction
B. Description of Purpose of MEAP
C. Factual Information About MEAP
D. School Building Presentations about Using Results
E. Reporting and Use Plan for District

Preparing the Report of District Results

The second of the three reports which each district should make to their school board is the report of the results. It is this report which is both the most difficult and yet most interesting. This report is crucial in establishing what meaning a variety of audiences derive from the MEAP scores for the district, the building and individual students. This report of results to the board may also serve as the report of results to the media, thereby increasing the importance of this report.

The results report should answer several basic questions:

a. How did we do this year?
b. Has reading and mathematics achievement improved over last year?
c. If so, why?
d. If not, why not?
e. What will be done to review and to use the results?

It should be emphasized that school districts downplay comparisons between districts or between school buildings within their district. These comparisons mislead the school board and the public by implication. The comparisons imply that districts or schools are being assessed in terms of total inputs or programs. The public is also misled into thinking that districts or schools with higher scores have no problem areas or needs, while districts or schools with lower scores have nothing but problems and needs. Such comparisons too easily

get translated into success/failure judgments of the entire school program.

It is important, in a report to the board about MEAP to mention other measures of achievement, as well as other school outcomes. These include other test results, number of graduates getting a job or further education, number of students qualifying for academic scholarships, and so forth. To assist the reader think of these, a list of other variables which could be included in the report of results is shown in Appendix B.

Included in the report of results should be a section dealing with what will be done to review the results and how the results will be used. This part of the report will show the school board how the results will be used in the district. It also provides a mechanism for at least one follow-up report later in the school year.

The report of the results should contain at least these sections. First, it is important to provide the reader with some basic information about MEAP. This would include:

a. that it is any every-pupil testing program covering grades, 4, 7, and 10;
b. Mathematics and Reading are tested;
c. results are returned for students, teachers, schools;
d. school results are used to make curriculum improvements, while student results are used to help students learn the skills missed.

The next section of the report will show the test results of the district. The most understandable numbers to present are the percentages of students who attained more than three quarters of the objectives (Category 4 on the proportions report). These percentages can be shown for this year versus the percentages in previous years. This will show changes in test scores.

In addition, it may be important to highlight any major changes in the performance of students on a few of the objectives. For example, if there have been dramatic increases on certain objectives, the changes in percentages of attainment can be mentioned. This would be important to do if the building teams have identified and worked on certain key objectives. This emphasis could help to reward the extra effort by pointing out how the building team effort has succeeded in improving student achievement. This may be difficult to do in 1980 with the changes in the MEAP tests.

If the performance of students has decreased significantly on certain objectives, this too is important to acknowledge. While the reasons for the declines may not be readily known, these results may encourage a more detailed review to determine the causes. If so, these plans can be mentioned in the report, as well.

The next section of the report is the hardest and yet, perhaps, the most important. Once the program has been described and the results presented, it is important to describe the implications of the results. It is important to answer the "so what?" question clearly, concisely, and honestly. It may be hard for district-level staff to describe the implications of the results. It is therefore important to involve school-level staff and administrators in a discussion of the implications. They have a first-hand knowledge of what students have been taught and their capabilities, and can describe the implications of the results in more concrete terms. Teachers and curriculum specialists can help add meaning to the district results by highlighting those test items and objectives which students' performance on met or did not meet established expectations. Finally, some summary statements about achievement level and change(s) over time should be made.

The final section of the report of results should be the district short- and intermediate-range plans to use the results. This section can describe what various buildings plan to do with the results, as well as the district-level coordination of these efforts. In addition (whether or not the board report serves as the public report to the news media) it would be a good idea to mention the district's plans to report the results to the media, to parents, and other citizens.

In summary, the report of results should contain these sections:

A. Background About MEAP
B. District Results
C. Interpretations of Results
D. Plans to Use Results

Follow-Up Reports

Once the results have been reported along with the plans for using the results, it is only logical to report back to the board on the progress in using them. The following topics are suggested for follow-up reports and should be of interest to the board: 1) specific areas of need selected as priority for review, 2) results of the curricula review process, 3) new instruction contemplated as a result of the curriculum review, 4) planned follow-up testing of schools after remediation, and 5) special activities (awards, summer programs and so forth) planned as a result of testing.

Sharing these follow-up reports with the school board helps to point out that the educators are concerned about student achievement and are using test results to help students improve. It also helps the school board focus on the instructional uses of MEAP and de-emphasize the "comparative" uses of the results.

The follow-up reports may be in writing only, or may involve teachers, administrators, parents, or students presenting some aspect of the program.

It is often useful to involve others in the reports, since they can talk in realistic terms about the uses of test results and can factually answer board members' questions.

Summary

In closing, the importance of reporting results quickly and accurately to the school board should be emphasized. The strategy suggested here consists of three parts: 1) a background briefing about purposes of MEAP and how results can be used, 2) a presentation of results, uses of results in the district and implications of results, and 3) follow-up reports that present specific ways results are being used. While this is not the only technique which can be used to present results, it is effective in focusing the attention of the school board, educators and the community on the instructional uses of MEAP. This will help avoid the use of MEAP results for comparative purposes. More importantly, it will help assure that the MEAP results are used to help improve student achievement.

ON DISTINGUISHING OUTCOMES FROM INPUTS

People usually judge schools on the basis of inputs, particularly the financial resources available to the school district. For example, school districts have frequently been ranked and given a "good" rating for having a relatively high per pupil expenditure, for paying higher than average salaries, and for hiring more employees per pupil relative to other schools. However, there is no guarantee that additional financial resources (inputs) alone will necessarily produce better results in student learning (outcomes). In fact, appeals that have been made on the premise that additional funding will improve educational quality have created a real dilemma for the schools. As financial support increased, public expectations also went up. But instead of evidence of overall progress, the public is confronted with reports of mixed results. Inputs do not measure how well a school is performing its job and parents and citizens need to be encouraged to examine outcome information as well as input data when trying to come to informed decisions about their schools.

Unfortunately, the emphasis on inputs has been so great that it is often difficult for parents and citizens to see that there is another way to look at the schools. Because outcome data has not been as readily available and may be more difficult to interpret than input data, it is tempting to take the course of the least resistance. But it is important for citizens, school board members, and parents to focus on outcomes and to be able to recognize the difference between input and outcome measures. The following "exercises" are provided to illustrate differences in judging a school on the basis of outcome and input measures.

An Exercise in Distinguishing Outcomes from Inputs

Decide whether each statement is a measure of outcome (results of schooling) or a measure of input (that which is invested in the school) and check the appropriate box.

	Outcomes	Inputs
1. The per pupil general fund expenditure for Michville Schools is $1,420.	[ ]	[ ]
2. Maria got one A, two B's, and two C's on her report card.	[ ]	[ ]
3. Michville's new school has many teaching devices to aid in instruction.	[ ]	[ ]
4. Eighty-one percent of the fourth graders showed they could tell time by accurately reading a clock.	[ ]	[ ]
5. The pupils in Mr. Wojtowicz' class showed a gain in spelling proficiency as measured by tests given at the beginning and the end of the year.	[ ]	[ ]
6. The average pupil-teacher ratio of Michville Elementary School is twenty-two pupils for each teacher.	[ ]	[ ]
7. Michville's seventh graders showed mastery of whole number computation and non-mastery of computing with fractions.	[ ]	[ ]
8. Otto's score on a standardized achievement test in mathematics indicates he did better than 55 percent of all other seventh graders who took the test.	[ ]	[ ]

Answers: Items 1, 3, 6 - inputs; items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 - outcomes

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Adapted from Evaluating the Educational Outcomes of Your Local Schools: A Manual for Parents and Citizens, Citizens Research Council, 1979, pg.8-9

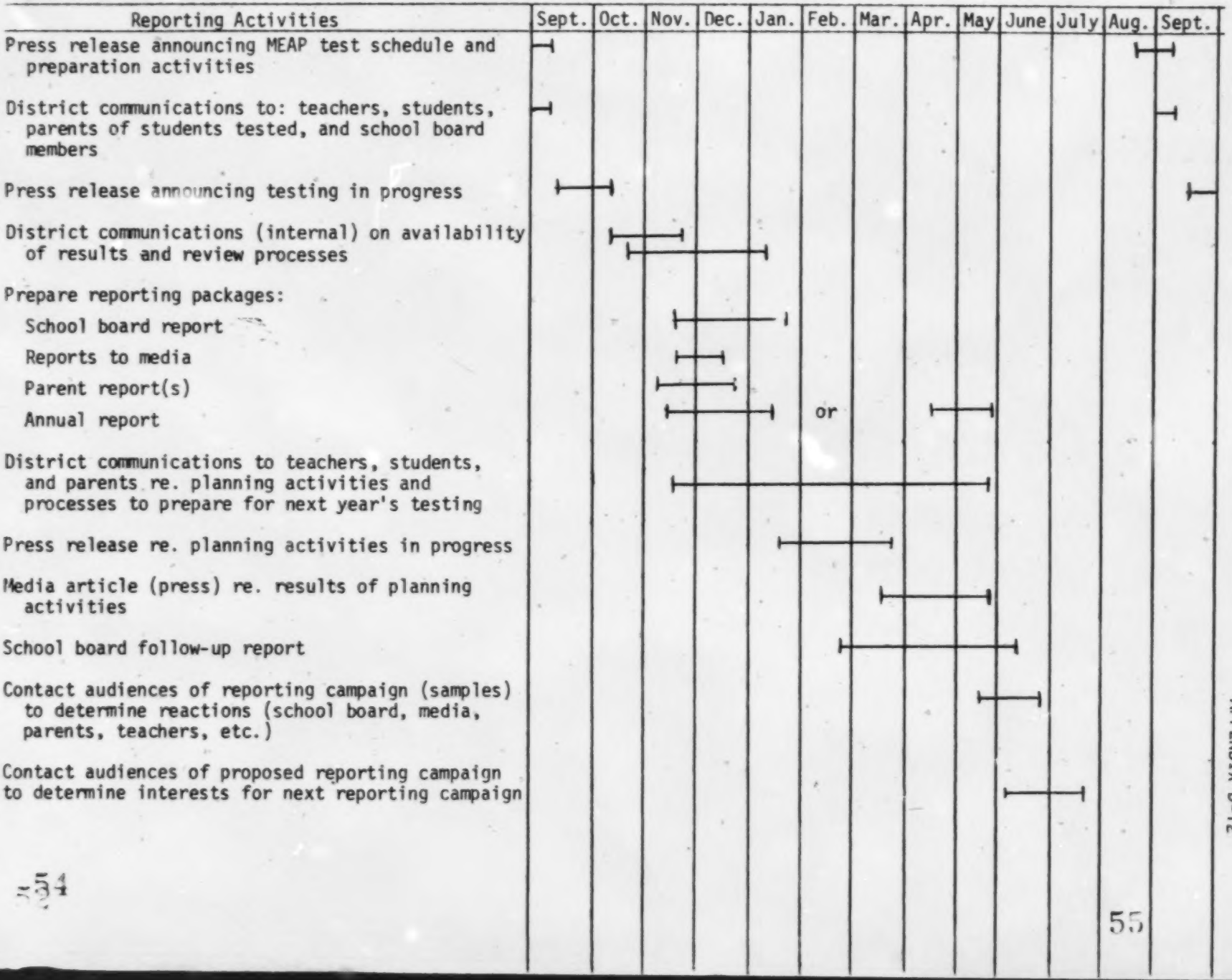
(Available in limited quantities for the MEAP)

PLANNING A REPORTING CAMPAIGN

School Events and Activities	Accompanying Reporting Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Dates Start	Dates Completion
A. *Prior to Testing* State Briefings Local Briefings Preparation for testing by Assessment Coordinators, teachers, students, and parents	1. Press Release announcing MEAP test schedule and preparation activities 2. District communications: to teachers to students to parents of students tested to school board on purposes of MEAP			
B. *Tests Administered*	1. Press Release announcing that testing is in progress			
C. *After Testing* Results Distributed: District, school, classroom student, parent Results Reviewed: identify strengths identify weaknesses curricular implications (district, school, classroom) instructional implications develop plans to address weaknesses	1. District communications about availability of results and review processes 2. Prepare reporting package(s): Identify information of interest (more than just MEAP) Identify information available Decide reporting formats Decide reporting schedule •School Board Report (see Monograph # 5) •Report(s) to Media (see Monograph # 6) results and conclusions plans for further action actions taken exemplary activities (esp. those based on use of MEAP data and subsequent planning) •Parent Report(s) (See Monograph # 4) •Annual Report			
D. *Preparation for Next Year's Testing* Identify high priority objectives (district, school)	1. District communications to teachers, students, and parents about planning activities and procedures			

School Events and Activities	Accompanying Reporting Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Dates	
			Start	Completion
Identify performance expectations (district, school) Identify procedures to be used to achieve expectations	2. Press Release about planning in progress (could request community volunteers) 3. Media articles about outcomes of planning activities 4. School board follow-up reports			
E. *Evaluate the Reporting Campaign* Identify strengths and weaknesses	1. Contact audiences to determine reactions to campaign (samples): School board Media Parents Teachers			
F. *Plan Next Reporting Campaign* Contact media persons (sample?) determine interests determine deadlines Contact parents (sample?) determine interests Contact teachers (sample?) determine interests Contact school board members determine interests				

PLANNING A REPORTING CAMPAIGN
Activity Timeline


Reporting Activities
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
July
Aug.
Sept.
1. Press release announcing MEAP test schedule and preparation activities
2. District communications to: teachers, students, parents of students tested, and school board members
3. Press release announcing testing in progress
4. District communications (internal) on availability of results and review processes
5. Prepare reporting packages:
School board report
Reports to media
Parent report(s)
Annual report
or
6. District communications to teachers, students, and parents re. planning activities and processes to prepare for next year's testing
7. Press release re. planning activities in progress
8. Media article (press) re. results of planning activities
9. School board follow-up report
10. Contact audiences of reporting campaign (samples) to determine reactions (school board, media, parents, teachers, etc.)
11. Contact audiences of proposed reporting campaign to determine interests for next reporting campaign

APPENDIX D-12

PLANNING A REPORTING CAMPAIGN
Communication Analysis Chart--Audience Oriented

WHO	WHAT	WHY	HOW	WHEN
• School Board				
• Media				
• Parents of Students Tested				
• All Parents				
• Community Persons				
◦ Local Government Officials				
◦ Civic Groups				
◦ Church Groups				
◦ School Groups				
• District Administrators				
• Building Administrators				
• Teachers of Students Tested				
• All Teachers				
• Educational Associations and Unions				
• Students Tested				
• All Students				